

Remarks of Chairman Henry J. Hyde
Full Committee Hearing
“Sudan: Consolidating Peace While Confronting Genocide”
Wednesday, June 22, 2005

The Committee will come to order.

The challenges we face today in Sudan are perhaps among the most difficult of our time. On the one hand, the peaceful resolution of a decades-long civil war between North and South is critical – an opening that could provide untold opportunities for peace, economic development and democratic aspirations. On the other hand, a genocidal conflict rages in the Darfur region of western Sudan – a conflict which claims up to 10,000 lives per month. Finally, the odious regime responsible for atrocities in both of those wars has offered the United States valuable support in the global war on terrorism. It is all too easy to see one of these developments as more important than the others. But I believe that would be a mistake.

Let us learn the lessons of our past failures in Sudan.

The war between North and South claimed the lives of over two million Sudanese and was punctuated by incredible brutality, including indiscriminate attacks against civilians, forcible conscription, enslavement, mass murder, arson, and rape. The United States poured hundreds of millions of dollars into humanitarian relief for Sudan, but never bothered to engage in a high-level effort to resolve the conflict until President Bush appointed Senator John Danforth to serve as his Special Envoy in 2001.

In the 1990s, when the war between the Government in Khartoum and rebels in the South was at its peak, the Sudanese government sought a diplomatic *rapprochement* with the United States. Khartoum, we were told, was willing to turn over a very well-known terrorist to U.S. law enforcement. But because of the war between North and South, and because of concerns about Khartoum’s atrocious conduct in that war, the offer was refused. Later, President Clinton described his failure to accept that offer as the biggest mistake of his presidency. The terrorist in

question was Osama bin Laden.

In Darfur today, the Sudanese Government is employing many of the same tactics it used in the South. No one knows the precise number of those who have perished as a result of the genocide, but numerous observers place the figure at roughly 300,000. Over two million Darfurians have been forced from their homes, entire villages have been razed, and there are widespread reports of arbitrary killings, abductions, looting, torture, and rape.

And now – just as in the 1990s – reports of a visit to the United States by the Sudanese Intelligence Chief, who allegedly has shared valuable information relating to the war on terrorism, have sparked outrage among those who rightly are concerned by genocide in Darfur.

In this context, there are three temptations that must be resisted today. The first is to focus solely on the crisis in Darfur, at the expense of solidifying the historic North-South peace accord. The second is to allow the end of the conflict between North and South to blind us to the grave human tragedy unfolding in Darfur. The third is to allow the Government of Sudan's reported cooperation in the war on terrorism to outweigh all of the above.

There will be no easy answers. But we must hold these three equally vexing challenges in our heads and be sure that we do not sacrifice one challenge to meet the others. The consequences of short-sightedness, as we saw on September 11, 2001, and continue to see today in Darfur, are horrifying.

Before turning to the esteemed Ranking Democratic Member, allow me to note that the Committee will entertain one-minute remarks by any Member who feels compelled to make them. I do, however, encourage restraint. We have a great deal to cover today, and we want to make sure that we allow enough time for questions.

With that, I turn to my friend, the distinguished Ranking Democratic Member, Tom Lantos, for his opening remarks.